

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 15, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We are writing to urge you to take steps to act on the provisions of H. Res. 901, which passed the U.S. House of Representatives by an overwhelming margin. This legislation brought together Democrats and Republicans in support of a change in U.S. policy—focusing on escalating human rights violations and erosion of civil liberties in Pakistan in the aftermath of the flawed February 2024 National Assembly elections. These elections were characterized by widespread irregularities, electoral fraud, and state-led suppression of the country’s leading party, PTI—including disenfranchising the party in the leadup to the vote, as well as reversing precinct-level results, which showed an overwhelming victory for PTI-associated independent candidates. We note with concern that crucial election monitoring reports—including the final reports by the Commonwealth Observer Group and a report from the European Union—were reportedly prevented from being made public by Pakistani authorities.

Since the elections, the situation has worsened—with rampant curbs on civil liberties, particularly on freedom of expression. Pakistani authorities have employed an increasingly authoritarian approach to curbing dissent, including the use of mass arrests, arbitrary detention, and the implementation of a de facto firewall against social media platforms, with reports of broader efforts to slow internet access speeds.

A focal point of our concern is the unlawful detention of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, widely perceived to be Pakistan’s most popular political figure. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention—along with Amnesty International and leading human rights organizations from around the world—have called for Khan’s immediate release. Many activists associated with former Prime Minister Khan’s PTI party, including senior party leaders such as Yasmin Rashid and Shah Mehmood Qureshi, have been in detention for over a year. We urgently call on the U.S. government to advocate for the immediate release of former Prime Minister Khan and all political prisoners, and to ensure their safety in line with the findings of the UN Working Group report.

Given these alarming developments, we believe a change of approach at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad is urgently needed. We are unaware of any efforts by the U.S. Embassy to incorporate the concerns of the Pakistani American community in its work—including meaningfully advocating for the release of political prisoners, the restoration of human rights, or respect for democratic principles. In the immediate aftermath of the elections—a time when both the Pakistani American community and many members of Congress were urging an investigation of the elections prior to U.S. recognition of the new government—the U.S. Embassy issued a statement welcoming the new administration. Five months later, the *New York Times* reported that that very government “has struggled to establish its legitimacy and has been criticized as little more than a front for the military.” We understand that Ambassador Blome is expected to depart his post in the coming months, and we urge you or your successor to ensure that the incoming Ambassador recognizes the importance and urgency of advancing human rights and democratic values.

We are convinced that the United States can and must do better. Both our fundamental principles and our long-term interests compel us to advance a U.S. policy toward Pakistan which places the human rights, dignity, and aspirations of the people of Pakistan at its core. Ultimately, we believe that the many vital interests that our countries share can only be effectively and sustainably advanced if accompanied by a U.S. approach driven by a robust commitment to the democratic process and universal rights.

We appreciate your attention to these urgent matters and look forward to further engagement with your Administration on how U.S. policy can contribute to a restoration of democracy and the protection of human rights in Pakistan.

Sincerely,



Susan Wild  
Member of Congress



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John James  
Member of Congress



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Joe Wilson  
Member of Congress  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Middle East,  
North Africa, and Central Asia



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Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress



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Daniel T. Kildee  
Member of Congress

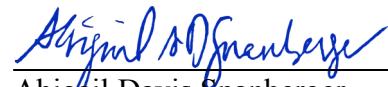


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Rich McCormick, MD, MBA  
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Abigail Spanberger  
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress

August Pfluger  
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Dina Titus  
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John R. Moolenaar  
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Mikie Sherrill  
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Greg Stanton  
Member of Congress



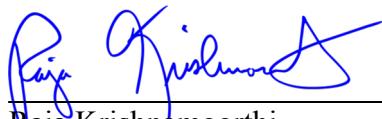
Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress



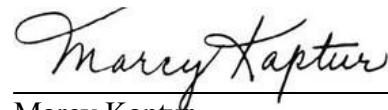
Patrick Ryan  
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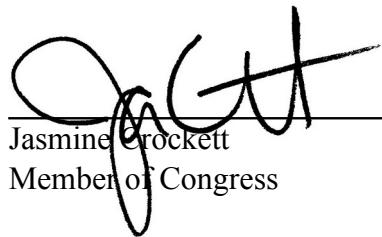
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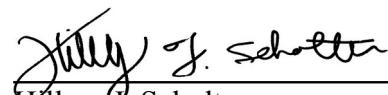
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Jasmine Crockett  
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Hillary J. Scholten  
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Nick LaLota  
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Maria Elvira Salazar  
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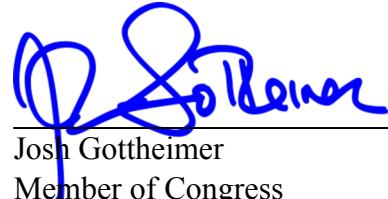
Gus M. Bilirakis  
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey  
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Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



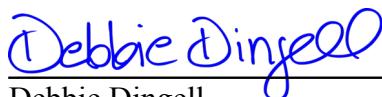
Josh Gottheimer  
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Young Kim  
Member of Congress



Nicole Malliotakis  
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Debbie Dingell  
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Andre Carson  
Member of Congress



Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Beth Van Duyne  
Member of Congress



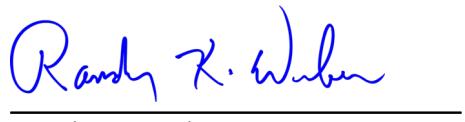
Tim Burchett  
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Nathaniel Moran  
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar  
Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary  
Department of State  
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Washington, D.C. 20520